1: Glacken E-5 (1951-1952) 1953 AC7 Okinawa AC7

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Historical Notes on Housing

In all villages, much time is spent, in addition to agricultural or fishing tasks, in housebuilding, either for one's self or for friends and neighbors. Housebuilding is the most time consuming of a man's tasks after his primary occupation. Repairs to or reconstruction of the poorer houses are continuous. The man with a good house and a tile roof has little to worry about. But he will often be found helping someone less fortunate.

The traditional houses of Naha and Shuri showed both Chinese and Japanese influences. The traditional house and compound of the rural village has been compared with the ancient Japanese house, and it bears some similarities with houses found among the Ainu.

It would seem from the observations and researches of earlier students that the house was always built above the ground without excavation, and sometimes on stilts. The supporting posts making up the rectangular house were either placed in holes or on stones on the ground. The supporting posts, the ridge poles, the cross beams were branches or trunks of trees trimmed and cut for length. Roofs of thatch had the apex of the roof covered by a saddle or arch shaped thatch made, like the rest of the roof, of grass. Smoke escaped either through an aperture in the ceiling or through a window, as it still does in many of the poorer houses. The houses were filled with smoke. The oldest rural houses apparently had only a dirt floor with scattered mats, though some had a raised floor.

The food storage sheds or small granaries were raised on stilts. Engravings of these have appeared both in Perry's writings and in Bayard Taylor's works. There is some question whether this granary (now disappeared) was indigenous or a borrowing. The purpose of the raised granary was probably to protect against dampness and to prevent infestation by rats and vermin. These granaries were open sided with no boarded up walls, and, in Okinawa, were circular.[1]

Animal pens or stalls were not attached to the house, but were always separate. In the courtyard, earthen rain water vessels were imbedded half way into the ground to catch the rain water. There were stalls for goats and pig pens, and the pig pens were used also as a toilet. This is no longer practiced to my knowledge, although the outhouse with its holes in the ground is found under the same roof as the pig pen. The entrance to the courtyard was opposite the front of the house. The protective stationary gate, the hinpun (in Okinawan), made of reeds or stones, stood at the entrance inside the court, as it does now, to shield the people of

1 For drawings of the granaries, see Satow, E. M. Notes on Loochoo. Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan, 1 (1882), 1-8. The drawings follow the text. See also Simon, Beitrage zur Kenntnis der Riukiu-Inseln, as cited, 75-85.

593 The husband or father is not a tyrant. Nevertheless the wife is unlikely to challenge her husband directly on any important matter. If she is scolded, she may continue with her work in silence, ignoring her husband.

562 177 Women who have lived abroad in places like Hawaii or who have experienced the metropolitan life of Japanese cities are more likely to be dissatisfied. Occasionally one meets a woman who thinks this is a man's world (otoko no tenka) and that women should have more privileges than they now have. This attitude has been sharpened through American influences, directly by contact with American soldiers and civilians, indirectly by discussions which appear in Japanese periodicals of the life of American women. How widely this attitude exists is difficult to say, though I believe that at present (January 1952) it is not a strong force among women in the villages.

562 Though her place is at home, the woman is by no means removed from the wider aspects of village life. She may take an active part in the Women's Association. She may handle the family money or part of it. She may operate a little store to supplement her husband's income from the fields, or if she is a widow, to provide for her own support. She may participate in mutual loan groups. And she may be the head of a household.

8

Public Health

515 511 951 The people of the villages are conscious of health and sanitation, an awareness gained under the Japanese. This awareness and desire for cleanliness and sanitation meet major obstacles in the lack of running water, the distance to public baths, the expense and trouble (or both) of heating quantities of water, the cost of soap, the poorness of the outdoor toilets especially in the devastated areas.

An analysis of village health problems requires the specialized knowledge of the physician or doctor of public health. The observations of a layman however may have some interest.

511 364 951 The general sanitary conditions are not good. The weak spots are (1) Poor outdoor toilets and their haphazard location with relation to wells. (2) The dirty and smoky Okinawan kitchen. Many have dirt floors and little effort is made to keep them clean. The situation is better with the stone floor or cemented kitchen. Women complain about smoke smarting and injuring their eyes. All of the rooms of an Okinawan house, especially in winter, are likely to be very smoky around meal times. (3) Food preparation and dishwashing are often done in dirty surroundings. Foods are fried or boiled, and this is all to the good. In making tea, the water is seldom boiled; more often it is only brought to a boil or allowed to get hot.

not use household equipment in their games. Instead they find broken dishes, old cans, and other discarded items in the trash heap.

The kitchen has no equipment other than the open fireplace with three hearth stones and a shelf above it on which a salt column, symbolizing kitchen deities, is kept. During the last few years, the Ryukyan government Home Extension Service has been trying to introduce brick stoves into farmhouses. Several families now have this kind of stove although it is expensive to build.

As far as can be superficially discerned, the home is kept clean. A visitor usually finds the floor of the house free of dirt. Footgear is taken off before entering, and children are reminded to wash their bare feet before going into the house. Less care is given to the area around the kitchen.

Outside the kitchen stand one or two jars to store water. A dipper is kept nearby, and children playing in the vicinity or adults often walk to one of these jars for water, which they drink out of a dipper. There may also be an array of pots, pans, crates, baskets, and other equipment piled up around the kitchen. Knives and hatchets are openly left around among the equipment behind the kitchen.

The courtyard is an important place for domestic activities. Here women and girls wash dishes, mix pig food in large kettles, make bean paste in a hand stone grinder, and prepare grain for storage. There are vegetable patches in one corner of the yard, chicken coops, pigsties, goat pens, and an outhouse in another. Most garbage is fed to the pigs; the rest is thrown over the sea wall to roll down onto the beach.

* * *

Chapter 2

Daily Routine

There are few clocks in central Taira. Except for the township office, post office, and village store, only two or three families own a timepiece. Twice a day, at noon and 10 o'clock in the evening, a clerk strikes

857 the infant still at the breast who is taken on shopping trips to Nago, the nearest town, or to neighboring townships to visit maternal relatives. When whale meat was marketed from the village on weekends, a school age child was taken along to carry the infant because the mother was burdened with her basket of meat, but this was infrequent. Few children have explored their township beyond Miyagi, a village 5 miles to the east of Taira or Gesashi, 4 miles to the southwest.

●[364] Children also rummage through the garbage heaps, where they find useful things like tin cans, bottles, and discarded bits of vegetable with which to play house or store.

857 241 During the harvest and planting seasons, children accompany adults to the rice paddies and potato fields near the village. Mats are spread out on the dikes and kindergarten children gaily dangle their feet in the oozy mud while "keeping watch over the sleeping infants." Those who whimper to help are given small sheaves of rice to carry to their fathers and older brothers, who thresh them in the dry fields or on the flat grounds bordering the paddies.

855 [412] Many 4-year-olds are adept at handling knives. As implements like knives, hatchets, pronged hoes, sickles, rakes, and saws were often left within reach of children, it was not unusual for them to use them. Although many cut themselves, adults do not seem to take special care to put them out of reach. Children of kindergarten age are frequently scolded for playing with sharp instruments, but with persistent crying or begging they usually gain reluctant consent.

852 855 527 During all holiday events, children participate without much control from adults. Young children are carried by their mothers as they make the visiting rounds or sit on the floor in the building where the whole village congregates. Toddlers explore the surroundings and, finding themselves in the middle of the dance floor, are gently pushed aside and handed back to their mother. Older children hang around while food is served; then they disappear to play games of their own. During sport events, track meets, wrestling, and at dance performances, children are as interested spectators as their parents. Nobody would think of leaving a child at home on a holiday, and nobody would demand that the child sit quietly through lengthy speeches or ceremonies.

868 535 [872] Children learn dances from kindergarten days on, either by watching or by coaching from an older person, a friend, one's older sister, or mother. Sometimes they are called on to perform for adults, or a special children's performance is given under the direction of the kindergarten teacher. Adults enjoy these dances as much as if they were done by grownups. They are amused and delighted if a little girl

751
514 The drum is nearly full and its surface is in constant motion, a seething
343 mass of maggots. One of those men with the carts that cause you to cross
[364] to the other side of the road will come in a few days to dump it, he hopes.
574 He crosses the yard and is invited into the house. He takes off his shoes
751 and steps up onto the floor. It is surprisingly clean, he finds. A mat is
[356] spread and he sits cross-legged upon it. Tea is offered and he accepts, thinking that it must have been made from boiled water. He learns later that he was wrong. He is given a fan and perceives that its function is keeping the flies away as much as it is creating a breeze. In a spirit of friendly cooperation he and Grandfather take turns shooing the flies off the broken chunks of black sugar that have been placed before them. A larger blue-bottle fly enters and someone makes a special effort to chase
[825] it out. Should the visitor be so crude and impolite as to mention flies and in connection with the toilet, it will be pointed out that only the blue-bottle flies are hatched from the maggots in the toilet. The smaller black house-flies simply produce more flies and hence are harmless.

[264] Bananas are served and the peels follow those of the potatoes out
[515] onto the ground. Smaller children run in and out. One child comes in with its nose running. After a time Mother pulls up its shirt tail and wipes the
[758] mucus off the upper lip. The child has not been well; Mother or Grandmother may take it to the yabuu, who will burn moxa on its skin at the proper
[753] places. A neighbor's child walks by; its face and nearly hairless head are a mass of scabs and its eyes are almost shut by pus. Someone laughingly explains that this is what happens when you don't cut a baby's buttocks properly with a razor to draw out the bad blood.

The visitor is urged to take more tea and sugar. He is complimented on his interest in Okinawa and is asked innumerable questions about America. The family is eager for knowledge and for further contact. As he rises to leave, he is urged to return. He puts on his shoes, finding one slightly
[753] damp from the poor aim of the youngest child. He is cautioned to wear his hat and knows by now the unspoken fear---encephalitis---caused by too much
[296] exposure to the sun. He notices that around the well where Mother has been doing laundry a great pool of water is gradually sinking into the sand. As he picks his way across the yard he wonders if the family would not be better off living in a houseboat, preferably in a fast-moving stream.

751 Such are some of the features of Okinawan life. Yet it would be a mistake to assume that there are no standards of sanitation. There are; they
356 are simply narrower than those of most Americans. Many Okinawans do throw
751 garbage out their front doors as indicated above, but it is also true that the floor of the house is usually cleaner than many American floors. It has to be clean; people sit on it and sleep on it. People take off their shoes before stepping up onto it or if they have been to the fields barefooted
751 they may wash their feet before stepping up onto it. But the area of clean-
[351] liness ends with the step. Beyond the step is a different sort of territory.
[514] Yet even in the yard there is a limit to the amount of trash that may be allowed to accumulate before it is swept away. The practice of urinating in the yard is distasteful to the American observer, but there is perhaps less basis for objection to it as a health hazard. Urine is relatively harmless. Feces, however, go into the toilet. If an untrained child defecates in the yard usually someone cleans up the spot.

751 312 364 156 Social factors contributing to poor sanitation stem mainly from the failure of the individual in Okinawan society to take individual action. For example, four unrelated families, one of which I knew well, rented the four quarters of a house in the city. The well beside the house was badly in need of a drainage system: the water from everyone's laundry and bathing formed a large puddle around the concrete well-top and eventually sank into the ground, no doubt to re-enter the well, which of course also provided drinking water. No one made a move to do anything about this individually. Finally the owner of the house suggested that the several families join with him on a certain day in digging a drainage ditch. This was done. However, instead of digging a ditch to allow the water to run down hill and away, they dug the ditch only a few feet into a tiny field on the same level as the house and well. They did not feel that they could dig a ditch that led the water onto the land of the family who lived below, despite the fact that this was the natural lay of the land and despite the fact that the water was now sinking into the ground above the well of another neighbor. It was felt that only if all the neighbors joined to dig ditches together to allow all the water to drain to the municipal drainage ditch beside the street, only then would it be proper to let one's old wash water drain into another's yard. So far as I know this joint action was never taken.

751 364 156 At the same house, when one of the tenants moved out they dumped a great pile of garbage in front of their room. Another tenant moved into the room and, although the wife commented on the "bad sanitation" ('eisei ga warui'), for some time nothing was done about the pile of garbage. In this case the reason for inaction may have been pride rather than consideration of another's feelings. It seems likely that the new tenant felt that it was not his responsibility to remove the garbage and that it was also beneath his dignity to do so.

Social factors of this sort can perhaps be attacked in two ways. First, by appealing to the individual, to his pride and his esthetic sense, and by creating a greater degree of personal identification, it may be possible to extend the "sphere of sanitation" beyond the floor of the house and out into the yard and perhaps even to the street. But this would not be an easy task. At the present time the average Okinawan is probably less embarrassed by a pile of garbage in his yard and the hundreds of flies that infest it, than he would be to be seen doing the menial task of cleaning it up. He would not feel embarrassed, however, if it were a community endeavor. And therefore as a second method of attack one might encourage more group action. But this requires the development of outspoken leadership.

178 751 744 [625] It is possible that standards of sanitation are lower at the present time than before the war. Residents of the village of Yamada spoke of the "big cleanings" ('ðsčji') that were held at regular intervals before the war. On orders from the 'son' office every household in the village was obliged to clean up its house and yard and submit to inspection by the local police officer, a man who was much more feared than his present counterpart. At present clean-ups may be encouraged by the Youth Organization, Women's Organization, etc., but there is certainly less compulsion than formerly. Moreover, during the last days of the battle and for a period of

52 The general characteristics of the changed entertainment patterns
178 have been a greater reliance on entertainment provided by sources outside
621 the village---the school, radio, movies---and a sharp decline in celebrations and festivals of the sort which emphasized village participation and unity.

Health and Medicine Changes in medical practice well illustrate the
757 principle that material things find more ready acceptance than ideas in the
753 diffusion of culture; in short, Okinawans have been willing to adopt modern
177 medicine when available, but not modern medical principles. Pills, shots, surgery, dentistry, penicillin, and DDT have found acceptance, while modern scientific concepts of disease, health, and sanitation seem to have made relatively little headway. The germ theory, for example, has barely penetrated.

753 However, on talking to people of different ages one becomes aware
751 that many changes in standards of sanitation and ideas about health and dis-
177 ease actually have taken place in the last fifty years. For example, evidence of the practice of tattooing various parts of the body as a cure for certain ills is rarely seen on persons under seventy. Similarly, though many of the younger generation may appear abysmally ignorant of modern knowledge of disease, they are always less ignorant and better informed than the preceding generation. Considerable progress toward better sanitation was made under the
[364] Japanese. Formerly the Okinawan privy was built atop the pigpen, and the pig
231 subsisted in part on human feces. Stern measures were required to force the abandonment of this practice. The Japanese also introduced monthly sanitation inspections; inoculations for babies and school children were made compulsory.
[515] Through the influence of the schools the toothbrush (usually one) became a
[582] part of every home. The Japanese also sent notable scholars into the countryside to lecture the people on the dangers of in-breeding practices, particularly kin-group endogamy.

757 Penicillin, which was introduced by the Americans, has become a pop-
177 ular treatment, achieving equality with moxacautery and cutting to let blood. It can be obtained easily at any drug shop, and every doctor, midwife, herbalist, and practitioner of any sort is prepared to administer shots. Reliance excessive even by American standards is placed on this drug. There seems, in fact, to be a fondness for shots which does not end with penicillin; hormone shots and various other injections are widely advertised. It is the opinion of the author that any type of modern medicine which cuts, punctures, or otherwise disfigures the skin will find ready acceptance; this, it is felt, is merely an extension of the tradition of acupuncture, moxacautery, tattooing, and cutting. Bettelheim states that in the 1850's the Okinawans made inquiries as to how inoculations for smallpox might be obtained.[1]

759 There is some indication that the yabu, a practitioner whose chief
178 stocks-in-trade are herbs and moxacautery, is slowly disappearing; in several communities the author was told that since the old yabu died there had been no replacement.

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[1] Bettelheim, B. J., Loochoo Mission, London, n.d., pp. 34-36.